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NSC BRIEFING

8 June 1954

FRENCH ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT PROSPECTS

I. This week's National Assembly schedule calls for:

A. Hostile interpellations on Indochina (start Tuesday 8 June) by Socialists, Gaullists.

B. These should take all 8 June, possibly part of Wednesday 9 June (evening session planned 9th if necessary).

C. Government may not complete reply by 9 June.

Laniel demand for confidence vote is possible early AM Thursday 10 June.

E. However, required 24-hour delay would postpone actual vote until Friday 11 June at earliest: vote might not come until next week.

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1. Prospects outlook most crucial in  
life Fourth Republic.

A. Laniel opposition in Assembly  
stiffer.

1. Increasing impatience over  
lack progress at Geneva:
2. Anti-EDC forces (center, right)  
hope use Indochina to over-  
throw government because fear  
of pro-EDC developments.

B. Despite this Laniel may be able  
to hold on:

1. Will point to positive steps  
taken in Indochina, dispatch  
of top general, Ely.
2. Coalition parties unwilling  
accept onus for crisis while  
Geneva still offers hope.
3. Opposition still unable to  
agree on a successor to Laniel.

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C. New factor, however, is politicians' view that new elections good idea.

1. Forming new government in present Assembly might take as long as new elections: they remember 5-week crisis spring 1953. Only takes 6-7 weeks form new Assembly.

2. Success of pro-EDC candidates in recent by-elections indicates that new Assembly would be more pro-EDC.

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